rēḱs deiwoskʷe

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Knowledge will murder the world.

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Chapter 1

rē ḱ s deiwos - k ʷ e

or

The King and the God

You should know but you do not know. The lines are scripted into one's body – one cannot simply forget the tales of one's birth, the progenitur tale seared into the baby's flesh through thin-beating walls. Here there are words. Let me read them for you.

Once there was a child, and before it had grown, the Kyuubi came.

I cannot describe it to you. We call it the Kyuubi, the Ninetails, because the words that actually describe it, not just the shape, that meager body you see outside every day on the way to market, are words that would hurt you. Would kill you, because you are soft yet, little thing.

And yet, I suppose not. You are who you are. Listen closely.

Eotcya.

Stand up now. Wipe that blood from your chin. You are not so weak as to be brought down by a single word, I suppose.

That word which I will not repeat summarizes one part of the Great Beast. It lays name to the connection between the natural world and the beating blood within the beast – the inevitable trail by which the Beast draws within all the hatred and bloodshed of the world, interring it within itself. That is the Wheel of Curs, which is the lesser name, the humanicized name, for the path I have just spoken for you. Do not speak that name either. It contains the same power, to a lesser extent.

What?

Yes. The Great Beast is the Ninetailed. Never say that word – Kyuubi – again. You have risen above the lesser utterings of the peasantry; if you are to name and to hear the Beast, you must do more than to whimper in the shadows of its reality.

Do you understand?

Good.

Continuing on. There are seven words for the Beast that have survived into the tongues of men. One I have just spoken for you – take care not to repeat it, the cost of speaking such a word is far more than that of hearing it. In its simplest, crudest form, it would mean Fur, or Skin. The membrane that seperates the Beast from the rude world about it. I will not teach you those things simple or crude, though I will tell you what they are. If I ever hear them from you, I will strip the skin from your head and leave you to lie in the sun for three days. You would survive it. You would not enjoy it.

I am here to teach you only those things precise and inviolable, in which nature resides in the syllables and the tone. I am here to teach you not words that boat meaning; but meaning borne into sound, which is not at all the same thing – it is the same difference between a man that wears a fox mask and the fox itself.

Do you not understand?

Then listen anyway. You will, one day, or I will kill you.

I return to my original course. There are seven words for the Beast – one which I have taught you. You will not have to concern yourself with remembering how to pronounce it, or the stresses, or the spelling – these are not concepts relevant to that word. You will remember it as it is. It will take no effort, I promise you.

The other six are also concerned with what, I suppose, might be described as the 'physical concepts' of the Great Beast. In their rudest forms, Claw, Fang, Eye, Heart, Bone, and Blood. They relate to each other intimately, as you might say they are all the same language. Each of them contains and enforces meaning upon the world.

Do you remember, how it felt when I released that word? How it felt like a blow upon your face, shoving you back, invading that space once occupied as yours?

That word, which may be translated as the Wheel of Curs, carves away a piece of the world to belong to the Beast. That territory becomes its own, a domain and territory we cannot intrude upon – and your flesh, weak and ignorant as it is, cannot ignore that marking. Even should you be bound, or asleep, or dead and broken – your flesh will flee that ground, as quickly as it can. I could speak that word and throw you into the sky, away from even the earth itself, because the Presence of the Beast is something much more intimately intwined with our natures than the base earth.

Yes, I see you understand. You see and and grasp it. Power, you are thinking. Power I can use.

Be very careful what powers you grip. They are not yours. You are intruding on the Presence of the Beast.

Well. I suppose not you, after all.

I want you to think about this word. Grasp it in your mind, shape it in your mouth. But allow no wind to pass by your mouth and your lungs, and thus pronounce the word itself. The making of it would hurt you, again, far worse than I have done.

You must tame your flesh to the Presence of the Beast before you can wield it against other men.

The other six words all contain meaning in much the same way; that which the broken peasantry call the Eye, which may be more correctly translated as The Eater of Light, or The Eating of Light – a difference that depends largely on personal comprehension, I suppose – will blind you.

I see you do not understand.

Imagine a word in which you do not have to see any man's face, or any man's mouth, to understand what he wished to say to you.

You would know this, child. What is the difference between what a man says, what his face says, and what his body says? Where does the lie begin, end, and the truth of his measly heart begin?

Ah, you do understand. I had thought you would. You see lies all the time, do you not.

The Eater of Light takes away the mouth, and the face, and the eyes, and the body. It takes away the page on which words may rest, the sign on which a picture resides, the sound of songbirds in the trees and the rushing of waters against their banks. The way is made clear, and for a time, you will not see the distances all worlds place between their meanings and themselves. You will only see the reality, hidden behind the sussurus of the realm.

Yes. It is a powerful tool.

My eyes?

Yes. I took them out so that I would always be Eating the Light. I can tell what fabric of clothing you wear, what color your skin is two fingernails beneath the surface, what color the back of your eyelids are. I know you drank spoiled milk this morning because your stomach is still growling and I can hear it cutting apart the milk to drink. I can see your sweat before it reaches your skin.

I am not fully perfect with the Word as yet. But I am very close.

No, I will not teach you it. You are not worthy. Not yet.

Ah, you wish to know the other two words? Wise child. They are the tale you must learn and hold close to your heart, if you are to speak the true names of the Beast.

There are seven words we know of the Beast, describing each of the Paths by which it intrudes onto the rude physical realm. The Beast itself is a world equal to our own, an existence of one, which we cannot comprehend. We have rocks and trees and animals and each other – but the Beast has only itself, can only percieve itself, does not recognize the existence of anything else. It is its own realm and I hardly believe that it recognizes there is another world outside of itself – or around itself – or poured around itself. The only bridges are the six words that we know, that invoke and invite a path to the Beast.

But, you see, they are no different than invoking a rock or a tree of our world – the landscape which we might occasionally see and interact with, but are not us, merely sharing our realm and shaping it through their being. We might notice a change, a perturbation, but it is not related to us, not truly.

The last two names invoke the Beast, that which thinks and percieves of that realm itself. It is God, but not our God. It is a thing which destroys that which it takes notice of only by the weight of its regard and existence.

I have not heard them spoken, although I know them myself by divining, in the silence of the night, in a windless, locked room without doors or openings, where no air would stir the word from within my gullet. To speak those words is death. The Beast will crush you simply by its notice, and the turning of its thought toward you will erase the very concept of your from our realm – as the sun erases snow or ice by its simple gaze.

One word is the mind of the Beast, another path, but one that invokes the conscious and the will, and its use will draw the notice of

the Great Beast. I will not even speak the translation of the word as men know it. Even the shadow of the Beast's intent is a terrible thing.

The last is the name of the Great Beast itself, the Realm, its Paths, and all existence and potentiality therein. I do not know it. I do not know what Men would call it. I do not know if Men can call it at all.

But the Name is there, regardless. It is what called the Beast into – or beside – or through our world; no other power or conception could do such a thing. The Name has, thus, already been invoked once in the history of our world.

And all Namers seek that Name, the Great Beast's Name; to we who seek the truth of concepts in the world, it would be the ultimate power. It would be the ultimate grasp.

For, with the name of one Realm; why, wouldn't it be a simple thing to discover the name of another?

Our own?

But those are questions for a long time down the path of Namers, which you have only just begun upon. You will have years and blood and names to go before you may grasp that ultimate reality within your fingers, or even begin to whisper the translations of it within the depths of your mind.

But – I honestly think that you might have a gift, an edge for it we do not possess. I think you will be able to find that Name in the end.

Young Naruto.

GelouG

GelouG

It has been years. Years and years. These years that tremble and trickle, the sun that leaks into the sea and poisons it yellow. I have watched and waited and this child has grown mighty; he has become a Namer, and all that which it entails. And it is now my time; to fall into the seethe and be consumed.

Go forth, child, you have known what I have known.

"So what's the take?" Naruto says, amiable. He leans on the mission counter before the receptionist; his shadow stretches over her and clutches the drywall behind her, which shreds within the grip.

"Ten K two-forty, sign here." she answers mechanically, and her body spins to offer a piece of paper up to him, stamped with a man's life and the record of his death. Cause: burn wounds. Contract client: Konohagakure. Executing Agent: Naruto. No last name. No shinobi ID. Not part of Konohagakure Armed Shinobi Forces, special contractor. Refer Hokage Office, code 1DX3566.

Naruto smiles down at her, an arc of teeth that gleams straight through the stuffy grey light of dawn, and for a split second she perceives the thing that actually lies before her, the long, coiling body and dark-matted fur, the close-knit teeth and jaws that gape. Then the awareness slips from her in the numbering of a form and her primal brain screams as it is locked away beneath Regulation and Rule and Code Format.

Naruto takes the form. He smiles down at her again.

Baressa Hachiman, career Chunnin. Graduated 132 VF (Village Formation), immigrant from Iwagakure. Under light suspicion of

espionage for her home country. Kept to unimportant desk duty until loyalty is confirmed.

Naruto knows everything there is to know about this woman, this girl of twenty-one, who repeats numbers in her head as she ignores the shadow looming over her. No one would miss her. He knows this.

"Have a good day." he says cheerily, and he exits the mission office, as the shadow digs long furrows into the drywall and tile behind him, which slowly begins to reknit itself. Just as the girl would if he killed her. Just as the village would if he set it all aflame, burnt it all to ash and danced upon the corpses and kindling. This is hell, Jigoku, and Naruto has been trapped here for years and years. Nothing changes, not for long. The bodies walk without souls. The walls mend without carpenters. The plants grow without rain.

Aware of the futility, Naruto goes to visit the puppetmaster. His teeth shine as he walks, his lips a red curtain over white bone.

On top of the Hokage monument, Naruto stands and stares out at the dead horizon. There is nothing beyond Konoha's walls; a black horizon parallels the cloud-studded one above. No ground, no grass, no trees beyond the wall. Only the infinite nothing.

"I'm here again." he says. He hates the redundancy deeply, but it is the only way It will answer.

There is a shift and the Hokage momument melts; and Naruto stands atop something tremendous, beyond Name save Its own. The black horizon becomes an endless mantle of blood-matted fur, and the Tower opens lengthwise, to reveal an eye the size of a thunderstorm. He feels heat bathe him instantly, enough to make him sweat.

YOU ARE It answers, in no more a voice than a bellow of statement, or an animal's roar. It does not vibrate matter to produce pitiful

sound, or speak with shuddering cords in throat – what It wishes is. Such is the nature of divinity.

"Four souls for an hour." Naruto says, and smiles his toothy grin, a gesture that means nothing to nothing; it is the dancing of a dead angler in the deep, with no one to see or notice.

YES It answers, and the world warps, to begin the long mesh back into the reality Naruto once stood within. For an hour, Naruto will be free, to smell scents that are real, to find Names with real meaning, to discover and learn and enjoy.

For this he must pay the price of four souls, souls that will be drained to a husk, their knowledge and names taken to feed a Realm unto itself, but Naruto has long since surrendered even the illusion of guilt. He has begun to enjoy the taking.

A maw opens before him, a toothy gap out into a world he has almost forgotten; it has been two months since he saw grass that did not hide in itself the Presence of the Beast. For anyone else there would be no difference, but to him it is purest torture, to look everywhere but see only the one Name; the Name he whispered as a foundling, unaware of what he would wreak.

Naruto steps out on the grass (*Ghoraz* , he thinks, and the blades stir to his will) and turns back, but there is nothing. The Beast has drawn back for the length of an hour, and instead he only sees the great sequoias (*Baȯhst*) that swamp Konoha in their branches (*Gœmmun*).

He stretches out his hands, and feels the air. The wind that billows. The faint tickle of a storm, as it roars to the distance in the east.

This is the world he surrendered for a Name.

He still does not know if he regrets it, and it has been years and years since.

The Gulp of Names, coded 5QT0948

Produced: Naruto (Uzumaki) under Master (Unknown)

Recording Agent: Baressa Hachiman, c. 3/5/152

Small book attributed tto foundling child, specifically the (**REDACTED** *). Book concerns "Names", described as elemental knowledge of a unit, substance, or being that allows command or interaction with it. Book is bound with unknown substance, osmoses biological compounds for unknown purpose. Pages (crafted of other unknown substance) actively deal corrosive cellular damage to unprotected biological substances (see: Casualty Rep. 543000291-*******95), recommend remote manipulation with sterilized synthetic object.*

*Book contains 1,163 "Names", ordered via Schema according to ability to affect other "Names", beginning with various insects/vermin and graduating to inanimate objects (who influence via their relative duration, thus ranking higher). "Names" vary in effect according to their Schema and the Schema of what they influence – explanation here is brief. End of book lists "Names" of forty-three citizens of Konoha (all deceased, see 296839546-*******89), likely linked to Viper Abductions.*

Use of "Names" is inadvisable. Effect is unpredictable, unlinked to chakra use as current medical theory posits (see Lab Reports (**REDACTED** *)); recommend study by Fuinjutsu adept due to similarities in use.*

Addenda c. 3/25/152: Recommend subject be terminated. (see casualty report (**REDACTED** *)).*

The first he finds in a rice field. It is a farmer he does not know and never will, for the Beast does not share the Names it takes. The farmer is bent over, carefully tending a long row of beans. They are

healthy and free of blight, large and fat on the beanvines. It would have been a good harvest.

Naruto steps behind the man, and watches him work, silent. The farmer does not hum, or sing, or talk to himself. His breath is measured, spaced out to pace a day of hard labor. His skin is dark and there is a sunburn on the back of his neck. He has not noticed it yet, because the dirt under the man's fingernails is not smeared across the burn. He wears a long pair of work slacks and a brief tunic, opened wide to let the wind cool him.

These observations, Naruto treasures them. It is all a world he sees too briefly.

He has souls to gather, though.

{EOTCYA}

The man explodes. His bones crack under the weight of a world unknown, his blood boiled by the seething heat of the maddened fur. Red steam bursts out and is smashed inward by the inexorable grip of a god. The clothes sear black, stain with blood, and crumple.

Then it is gone, all of it that once composed this farmer, except for the tunic and slacks, which rapidly crumble to ash, falling upon the bean row. The leaves crinkle beneath the heat of the ash and begin to smolder.

Naruto feels the distant hum of the Beast, forever in his mind, as It swallows everything the man knew, the man was, and is partially sated. It is pleased. The farmer was a man of definites, of sunrises and work and dirt and seeds, no uncertainties or confusions to dilute the straight lines of meaning. This is the meal the Beast cannot provide itself, and the only service Naruto can even begin to offer It.

Three more souls, and fifty-six minutes of life.

Naruto turns his gaze eastward, towards the thunderstorm, and walks in a straight line towards it, and the harsh rain he can smell striking the ground, the sharp crack of thunder and the slow, ponderous grind of clouds against each other and the sky. There is a million Names in that storm, a whirling heart of what IS. It draws him inexorably onward.

Behind him, a leaf finally heats too much, and a naked flame alights on the edge of a leaf where the ash has settled. The bean row begins to burn.

I am not dead, and neither is he. Even in the heart of this great Thing, the beating realm It commands in mockery of the boy's home, I am not dead. I can taste Its command, so much more potent than the frail Names I wielded in my youth. Here all things are in seven Names, and in their proportion they are mighty; in their obscurity, their scarcity, their purity and majesty, I find meaning cleansed of dross.

Oh; It is mighty.

I will know It. I will possess It.

I am that I am, master of the boy, once Namer and now phantom; I am by my will.

I command: I shalt not die.

{JURURAYA}

; the heart that does not beat; its grip on life eternal, and unmeasured.